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EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

## TRUTH IN LOVE

### America: 'You Can't Handle the Truth!'

By Parris J. Baker  
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Toward the end of the legal thriller “A Few Good Men,”<sup>[1]</sup> Tom Cruise, as Lieutenant Daniel Kaffee of the U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General’s Corps, and Jack Nicholson, in the role of Marine Colonel Nathan Jessup, have an impassioned “tete-a-tete.” The courtroom, full of a variety of people: family, witnesses, other defense and prosecuting JAGs, the jury, Judge Randolph, and the defendants, witness the conclusion of their heated head-to-head confrontation and hear the following fiery exchange:



Col. Jessup: I'll answer the question. You want answers?

Lt. Kaffee: I think I'm entitled to them.

Col. Jessup: You want answers?!

Lt. Kaffee: I want the truth!

Col. Jessup: ***You can't handle the truth!***

This incredibly memorable movie courtroom scene is the climax of Lt. Kaffee's cunning legal efforts to expose the military's coverup of the death of Private William Santiago. The corrupt, arrogant, and contemptuous Col. Jessup unwittingly confesses, for the greater good, to ordering the illegal “code red,” believing his interpretation and execution of military rules permitted him to violate those rules with impunity; that he was above the law.

Does this story line sound familiar?

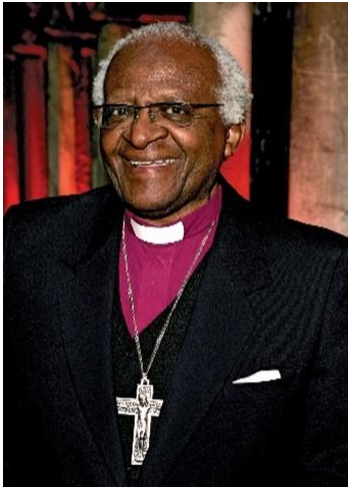
Unbelievably, in our nation's 247-year history, Donald Trump, the 2024 leading Republican presidential nominee, is the first president, past or present, to be indicted; not once but three times! There is at least one more future indictment expected soon. More incredulous is that the twice impeached, three-time indicted former president has proclaimed himself to be the purveyor of truth, even though by the end of his presidential term he had uttered 30,573 documented false or misleading claims.[2] That former President Trump, given his resume and character, is the leading candidate for the highest office in our nation and one of the most power positions in the world is baffling and disturbing.

As author George Orwell[3] noted, "During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act. The further a society drifts from the truth, the more it will hate those that speak it." Hence, the further the drift, the further becomes the distance between truth and the greater the risk of harm to those who speak truth. The makeshift "War on Woke," the sadistic attacks on gender orientation and fluidity, the autocratic and tyrannical controls of choice, access, and personal privacy, the hegemonic censorship of critical race theory and banning of books, and most recently, the purposeful misinterpretation of Black history regarding enslaved Africans are blatant indicators that our nation and our democracy are adrift.

It appears a moderate yet growing number of Americans have intentionally withdrawn from the legal and moral obligations of the citizenry: truth-seeking. Alice Walker[4] affirms, "I believe that the truth of any subject only comes when all sides of the story are put together. As long as the people don't fear the truth, there is hope. For once they fear it (truth), the one who tells it (truth) doesn't stand a chance. And today, truth is still beautiful ... but so frightening."

Addressing the anguish, grief, and fears of a cross-section of Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) attendees, candidate Donald Trump pledged, "if you put me back in the White House their reign is over. ... In 2016, I declared I am your voice. Today, I add, I am your warrior, I am your justice. And for those who have been wronged and betrayed, I am your retribution, I am your retribution." This type of magniloquence exposes the thoughts of an evil, mean, and empty spirit who, if re-elected, will most assuredly push America into a path of destruction and death.

The leadership of the Most Reverend Desmond Mpilo Tutu, the South African Anglican Archbishop, theologian, 1984 recipient of the Nobel Prize for Peace, and chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), may offer hope and provide a way for America to avoid the dangers of revenge seeking.



According to Bishop Tutu,[5] “Africans have this thing called Ubuntu. It is about the essence of being human; it is part of the gift that Africa will give the world. It embraces hospitality, caring about others, being able to go the extra mile for the sake of others. We believe that a person is a person through another person, that my humanity is caught up, bound up, inextricably, with yours.”

Ubuntu, an Afrocentric prospective for grasping and interpreting the African experience, reinforces the interconnectedness and mutuality inherent in our humanness or humanity. “I am, because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.”

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission[6] “was created to investigate gross human rights violations that were perpetrated during the period of the Apartheid regime in South Africa from 1960 to 1994, including abductions, killings, and torture. Its mandate covered violation by both the state and the liberation movements and allowed the commission to hold special hearings focused on specific sectors, institutions, and individuals.” Reconciliation, not retribution, was the guiding principle of the commission. The emphasis of TRC was to acquire as many perspectives as possible of truth from both the victims and the perpetrators (all sides of the story are put together) regarding the inhumane treatment experienced during apartheid.

The four assumptions of Afrocentrism – a worldview or ideological paradigm in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate – harmoniously connect the heritage and historic practices of Africans and African Americans with other histories and traditions.

#### **Four Afrocentric Assumptions[7]**

1. Individual identity is conceived as a collective and spiritual identity.
2. The concept of humanity places emphasis on harmony within the collective.
3. The spiritual aspects of humans are just as valid as the physical, quantifiable components.
4. Affective acquisition of knowing is valid.

At the conclusion of the courtroom scene, a mystified and confounded Col. Jessup, while being arrested, angrily shouts, “What the hell is this? I’m being charged with a crime?! Is that what this is? I’m being charged with a crime!?”  
America, what we need, now more than ever, are a few good men!

- [1] *A Few Good Men* (1992) was based on the play written by Aaron Sorkin. It was nominated for four Academy Awards.
- [2] Washington Post Fact Checker. [Here](#)
- [3] George Orwell is the pseudonym of Eric Authur Blair, a British novelist. His best-known works are *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. A polemicist, Orwell 's works were very critical of totalitarianism and authoritarianism.
- [4] Alice Malsenior Tallulah-Kate Walker is an American novelist and social activist. Ms. Walker is the first African American female to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize.
- [5] Bolden, R. & Philip, K. (January 2005). *Leadership in Africa: Meanings, impact, and identities*. United Kingdom: University of Exeter Business School. [Here](#)
- [6] United States Institute of Peace. Retrieved on August 2, 2023. [Here](#)
- [7] Schiele, J. H. (1994). Afrocentricity: Implications for Higher Education. *Journal of Black Studies*, 25(2), 150-169.
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